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New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral ..... (Portugal)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 29 *(continued)*

Commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations

Special Commemorative Meeting of the General Assembly on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations

The President: This morning we hold the third meeting of the Special Commemorative Meeting of the General Assembly on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

Before I call on the first speaker I should like to draw the attention of members to the report of the Preparatory Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations, document A/50/48. The draft resolution which appears in paragraph 2 of the report contains the Declaration on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations.

I am glad that yesterday we were able to complete work on time and I should like to remind all delegations again of the five-minute limit for each statement.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda

The President: The Assembly will first hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda.

His Excellency Mr. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Museveni: I tried to see whether I could read my statement in the stipulated five minutes and I found that I could not, so I have decided to summarize it instead of attempting to read it and breaking the rule.

First I wish to inform the Assembly that about nine months ago I was invited to Buenos Aires to address a seminar. The topic I was given to speak on was "Does Africa Matter?" That means that in the minds of some people the question whether Africa matters is being raised. Of course Africa matters. Africa covers an area of 30 million square kilometres. It is the second largest continent in the world. It now has 700 million people. Obviously it matters.

The reason some people are wondering why Africa matters is because of the backwardness of its economies and population. The main reason for that backwardness is the structure of society. I recently carried out a study and found that in the United Kingdom 52 per cent of the people are members of the middle class; 46 per cent of the people in the United Kingdom are members of the skilled working class; 2 per cent of the people are what is called the upper class — which I think means the aristocracy.

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What is the picture in Uganda? In Uganda 92 per cent of the people are peasants. The characteristic of peasant societies is that, first, they are parochial and, secondly, they base themselves on a subsistence economy. A characteristic of middle-class societies is that the middle class is the most enterprising social group in the history of man. Therefore the absence of the middle class in Uganda — and I presume in other African countries — is the source of the many problems we have in Africa.

Who caused this social distortion? Why is it that in the United Kingdom 52 per cent of the people are members of the middle class and there are no peasants? There are no longer any peasants in Europe. There were peasants in Europe 300 years ago. By the time of the French Revolution the peasant class was a strong class in Europe. What happened? Why is it that in Europe there is no longer a peasant class yet in Africa the peasant class is the dominant class? What are the reasons?

The main culprit is colonialism, because colonialism stopped the emergence of the middle class. Yet the middle class is a cosmopolitan-minded group. It consists of people who think about the whole world because these people are businessmen. They want to do business in the whole world. Therefore, when Africa is deficient in a middle class it means it is deficient in entrepreneurship and cosmopolitan ideas.

What do we do to redress the situation? There are five points to which we are addressing ourselves in Uganda. First, democratic governance — to have democracy; secondly, a liberalized economy, an economy that makes it easy for people to do business; thirdly, universal and compulsory education — sending everybody to school whether or not they want to go to school; fourthly, expanding the infrastructure — especially roads and power so that those who are doing business have the means to take their products to the markets; and, fifthly, regional integration — which means the integration of markets because one cannot produce unless there are markets to absorb what one produces.

Those are the five points that we in Uganda propose in order to eliminate the bottleneck of having a society without the very modern force that has been responsible for development in other areas, that is, a middle class.

I have been hearing talk that apart from wondering whether or not Africa matters, people are worried that Africa is being marginalized. When I ask, "What do you mean by saying that Africa is being marginalized?", they say that Africa is being forgotten by Europe. I am not worried about that. Africa will develop whether or not Europe's forgets Africa. It is my opinion that our development does not depend on Europe's remembering us. It does not matter if we are forgotten or marginalized but if members read my short statement they will see that it is crucial that we in Africa solve these bottleneck problems and the endogenous factors — the factors within Africa that have stopped us from developing. The exogenous factors, those from outside Africa, are only secondary, not primary.

Even if we get aid from the West, if we do not solve these internal bottlenecks and endogenous factors within our own countries there will be no development. On the other hand, even if we do not get any help, provided we solve the endogenous bottlenecks I am sure we shall develop.

Does that mean that Europe should not help us? No, Europe should help us. First, the Europeans owe us debts. They caused us many problems. They came and plundered our economies. They used our economies to build themselves up so it is a moral requirement that Europe should help us if only to pay for past mistakes.

But in the case of Uganda we will develop, it is in our hands and does not depend on whether or not they help us. That is why we fought for freedom. We now have freedom and we will develop one way or any other.

I come now to the United Nations. I commend the United Nations for maintaining peace over the past 50 years but it has been doing so without resources. Therefore I appeal to States that owe money to the United Nations to pay up. I was looking at the list and found that Uganda was not so bad when it came to paying its dues to the United Nations but it is important that the more powerful States should pay their United Nations dues.

However there is one problem I have found in United Nations programmes. It seems that we do not clearly define the circumstances in which the United Nations should be involved.

In the case of Haiti, it was easy for the United States to come in and support the legitimate authorities to assume power. But when the United Nations went into Somalia, who was the legal force there and who the illegal force? As far as I am concerned, all the groups in Somalia were illegal. There were groups that had

emerged as a result of an explosion that was a consequence of long periods of disenfranchisement of the people. In such a situation, who is the good boy and who is the bad boy? We must be very careful there.

That is why in such a situation I would rather concentrate on reconciliation, which would give us an interim Government. Then we could have elections in order to re-establish legitimacy, and then we could support the legitimate force. But simply coming in as we did in Somalia, I think, was a mistake in the first instance. We just came in and tried to take sides with one of the groups when, in fact, all of the groups were illegitimate.

In some other situations we have had elections on the basis of one man, one vote. This is a good beginning. However, one needs to be very careful, because if the principle of one man, one vote is on a sectarian basis, what you will get is a majority Government that is not necessarily a national Government, but a Government of just one of the sectors. And if you simply back it without looking closely at the problems, you may find that you are backing a sectarian majority in an effort to monopolize power. So I think that there you need a little flexibility.

Therefore, finally, one of the remedies we have applied in Uganda is always having a broad-based Government. In Uganda we do not believe in the principle of winner-take-all. Our country was torn apart by criminals such as Idi Amin, but when we came in we were able to put our country together by using the formula of everybody being in power instead of some people being in power and others out.

Everyone must have heard about the bad situation in Rwanda. Uganda had suffered similarly. When such problems arise in Africa, I am sure many people in Europe think to themselves that this is African barbarism. When they see children being massacred and women being slaughtered, I think that people in the world thin to themselves that this is African barbarism. But I would like to end my short speech here by saying that this is not so. Before colonialism, we used to have tribal wars. I can say that in spite of those wars, women, children and captives were never killed. Africans do not kill women. When there are too many women, you marry them — you have three, four, five or six wives. You do not kill them. I have never seen an African killing a woman. So this phenomenon of killing women and children is not African barbarism. It is another kind of barbarism: a barbarism created by the confluence of some foreign meddlers in our affairs with some local traitors. They are the ones who kill women, children and captives. Africans do not kill women and children.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of Uganda for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Sir Ketumile Masire, President of the Republic of Botswana

The President: The Assembly will next hear an address by His Excellency Sir Ketumile Masire, President of the Republic of Botswana.

His Excellency Sir Ketumile Masire, President of the Republic of Botswana, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Masire: Botswana congratulates Portugal on its assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session. We salute the Secretary-General for his inspiring stewardship of the United Nations at this critical moment in its history.

The presence of so many world leaders in New York bears witness to the success of the United Nations during its half century of existence. For Botswana and the African continent, this is a particularly historic moment. When the Organization was born in San Francisco in 1945, only four African countries were able to adhere as independent countries to the Declaration of the United Nations. The rest of the continent was still under colonial domination.

Today the United Nations boasts of African States among its 185 Members. On this fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, Botswana pays a warm tribute to a great Organization which has touched the lives of millions across continents.

The United Nations has served us well. Small States such as my own have found in the United Nations a vital forum for collective bargaining. It has contributed to the advancement of international cooperation in solving economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems. It is a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends. That is why, in our view, we need a more balanced, but effective and efficient, Security Council to act as our common tool in the pursuit and defence of these common objectives.

Africa's importance to the world is fully recognized. Most recently, we have seen the international community, through the United Nations, score major successes in peace-keeping and peacemaking in Africa. In my subregion, Mozambique has been rescued from the clutches of a monstrous war, South Africa has been delivered from the evil of apartheid, Namibia is now an independent country and in Angola the peace process has entered a promising phase.

One of the milestones of the last session of the General Assembly was the return of South Africa to the family of free and civilized nations as a democratic and non-racial country. It is difficult to understand how institutionalized racism was allowed to exist for so long in the aftermath of the victory of democracy over Nazism and fascism.

In West Africa, fortunately, Liberia is slowly moving back to peace after six years of bloody conflict. Elsewhere in Africa, we have seen tragedies of unspeakable proportions. Only last year, genocide was visited upon the people of Rwanda. Somalia is still bleeding, seemingly remote from the concerns of the world. Sierra Leone is being consumed by a bitter civil war. These are painful and troubling situations for the Governments and the people of Africa.

While it is obvious that Africa needs to strengthen its capacity to predict, prevent and contain conflict situations, the fact remains that the United Nations has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The Organization of African Unity stands ready to play its part, as envisaged in Articles 52 and 53 of the United Nations Charter.

On behalf of my country and my people, I reaffirm our binding faith in the Charter of this, our United Nations.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of Botswana for his statement.

His Excellency Sir Ketumile Masire, President of the Republic of Botswana, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Maréchal Mobutu Sese Seko, President of the Republic of Zaire

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Maréchal Mobutu Sese Seko, President of the Republic of Zaire.

His Excellency Maréchal Mobutu Sese Seko, President of the Republic of Zaire, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Mobutu Sese Seko (*interpretation from French*): It is a great honour for me and for Zaire, my country, once again to address this distinguished General Assembly as we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations.

First of all, may I warmly congratulate a man who is himself a symbol, on the one hand, of the universalism of the United Nations, and on the other hand, of an Africa which has come of age to the extent that it has made an indelible mark on the United Nations by bestowing on it one of its best talents. I refer to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, a worthy son of whom Africa is particularly proud and who is, with competence and a spirit of self-sacrifice, fulfilling the difficult and delicate mission which is his.

In my capacity as one of the elder statesmen among African heads of state, I wish, on behalf of my colleagues and of the peoples of Africa, to congratulate you warmly, Sir, on the honour which the international community has conferred upon you by electing you to the presidency of this regular session which coincides with the fiftieth anniversary of our Organization.

For us Africans, the United Nations is first and foremost a synonym of re-found dignity and freedom. The flag of the United Nations represents, above all, the universal emblem of the decolonization of the States of our continent. Indeed, members will recall that when the Charter founding the United Nations was signed in San Francisco, only eight African countries were among the first 51 States to be admitted. From 1960 to 1990, that is, from the first proclamations of independence to the independence of Namibia, all the other African States have progressively won their seat within the United Nations.

Like any human endeavour, the United Nations is far from having reached perfection. A forum for dialogue and for debate, an instrument for the prevention and management of conflicts and a guarantor of international law and of the integrity of States, it remains the only global meeting point where each people can make its voice heard.

This privilege, which places large and small on an equal footing within the United Nations, has strongly

characterized the links between my country, Zaire, and the Organization. In this respect, I would just like to recall two dates that are symbolic of this relationship. First of all, 20 September 1960, the date when Zaire was admitted to the United Nations, together with 12 other fraternal States from our continent.

The second date is 14 July 1960 when, in response to the appeal by Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba, the Security Council authorized the establishment of a military and civilian assistance operation in my country, which was then shaken by an armed conflict during which the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Dag Hammarskjold, on a peace mission to Zaire, died on African soil.

The United Nations may, it is true, fall short of our expectations. It sometimes fails. None the less, Zaire believes that recognition of this fact should first and foremost prompt Member States to seek further cohesion at higher levels and, in particular, at the regional level, as Article 52 of the Charter of the United Nations invites us to do.

In order to restore peace and stability in Africa, the United Nations should endorse the option chosen in 1963 by the founding fathers of the Organization of African Unity, that is, the inviolability of the borders inherited from colonialism. The political translation of this principle lies in safeguarding multi-ethnic States within which the rights of minorities are guaranteed.

It is desirable, in view of the new shape of the world, that the adaptation of the United Nations be extended to all its organs, including the Security Council.

Those who won the last world war conceived the Security Council as an organ within which their viewpoints were to prevail. While the geopolitics of that time might have justified such a state of affairs, today it must be recognized that, given the new international situation and the role expected of the United Nations, the exclusion of Africa and of certain powers is no longer justifiable and is an intolerable injustice. Hence, a revision of permanent representation on the Security Council is a logical demand and is necessary for the harmonious functioning of the United Nations system.

At this particular point in the history of our Organization, a courageous decision by the international community in this direction can only strengthen the role of the United Nations and will be recorded forever in the annals of our Organization for the greater good of present and future generations.

In the text of my statement which I have deposited with the Secretariat, I have provided a complete overview of the major problems of the day affecting Zaire, Africa and the world. I place special stress on the need to respect the sovereignty of Member States and draw the attention of our Organization to the emergence of a dangerous phenomenon, cynically termed the right of intervention.

I draw the attention of the United Nations to the tragedy that the phenomenon of refugees represents today and reiterate the proposal made at the Copenhagen Summit regarding the organization of a world conference on refugees.

Lastly, I could not fail to mention the distressing problem of Rwanda and Burundi, which is a dangerous threat to the peace, stability and development of the entire central and eastern regions of Africa. Initiatives are under way to find rapid solutions to this tragedy. These initiatives deserve the attention and support of the international community.

Bearing in mind the situation now prevailing in my own country, I dwell at length in my statement on the ways and means of resolving it. That is why I invite the international community to support our efforts with a view to the rapid organization of free, democratic and transparent elections.

On the threshold of the second 50 years of the United Nations and the eve of the third millennium, an affirmation of peace and cohesion among peoples must, more than ever before, constitute the prime legacy to bequeath to future generations. More than ever, it befits the United Nations to be the guarantor and the depository of this legacy.

As regards Africa more specifically, with its mosaics of ethnic communities, with its economic lag, with its social handicaps, I affirm that, both within and outside the continent, we must make solidarity, security and development our watchwords for action and the spearhead of the fight against discord and injustice in the world.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I thank the President of the Republic of Zaire for his statement.

His Excellency Maréchal Mobutu Sese Seko, President of the Republic of Zaire, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Nelson Mandela, President of the Republic of South Africa

The President: The Assembly will next hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Nelson Mandela, President of the Republic of South Africa.

His Excellency Mr. Nelson Mandela, President of the Republic of South Africa, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Mandela: When distinguished leaders came together half a century ago to consign to the past a war that had pitted humanity against itself, the ruins and the smoke from the dying fires were the monument to what should not have been.

Fifty years after the formation of the United Nations we meet to affirm our commitment to the founding ideal and the common desire to better the life of all human beings. What challenges us who define ourselves as "states-persons" is the clarion call to dare to think that what we are about is people — the proverbial man and woman in the street. These — the poor, the hungry, the victims of petty tyrants, the objectives of policy — demand change. What challenges us is to ensure that none should enjoy lesser rights, and none be tormented because they are born different, hold contrary political views, or pray to God in a different manner.

We come from Africa, and South Africa, on this historic occasion to pay tribute to that founding ideal and to thank the United Nations for challenging with us a system that defined fellow humans as lesser beings. The youth, at whom we have directed most of our awareness campaign on this golden jubilee, should marvel at the nobility of our intentions. They are also bound to wonder why it should be that poverty still pervades the greater part of the globe; that wars continue to rage; and that many in positions of power and privilege pursue cold-hearted philosophies which terrifyingly proclaim "I am not my brother's keeper". For no one, in the North or the South, can escape the cold fact that we are a single humanity.

At the end of the cold war the poor had hoped that all humanity would earn a peace dividend, enabling this Organization to address an expectation it was born to address. And they challenge us today to ensure their security, not only in peace but also in prosperity.

The changed world circumstances permit of neither the continued maldistribution of resources nor the related maldistribution of decision-making power within this Organization itself. Indeed, the United Nations has to reassess its role, redefine its profile and reshape its structures. It should truly reflect the diversity of our universe and ensure equity among the nations in the exercise of power within the system of international relations in general, and the Security Council in particular.

We raise this matter to make the fundamental point that the agenda of the next century and the programme of action to promote it can be true to the purposes of this Organization only if they are set by all of us. We must, without delay, constitute a new leadership for the new age and bring sunshine into the hearts of billions, including women, the disabled and children.

Circumstances may tempt us to bend to the pressures of *realpolitik*. However, like the founders, we are faced with the task of ensuring the convergence of word and deed. But we are unlike them in that the obstacles we face are fewer and the conditions more auspicious.

As the United Nations matures into the new millennium, it is called upon to facilitate the birth of a new world order of peace, democracy and prosperity for all. Thus we can honour the memory of those who perished in pursuit of the founding ideal and protect future generations from the pestilences of war, hunger, disease, ignorance and environmental degradation.

The time to act is now.

The President: I thank the President of South Africa for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Nelson Mandela, President of the Republic of South Africa, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Jacques Chirac, President of the French Republic

The President (*interpretation from French*): The Assembly will next hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Jacques Chirac, President of the French Republic.

His Excellency Mr. Jacques Chirac, President of the French Republic, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Chirac (*interpretation from French*): The world needs the United Nations.

Fifty years after the founding of the United Nations, at a time when there are questions and doubts in some quarters, I want to express France's confidence in our Organization and the high esteem that it has for the Secretary-General.

Confidence and, therefore, commitment. France has always been a leader in the search for peaceful solutions to the crises of our times. From Cambodia to Bosnia, it has become the leading contributor of United Nations troops.

Commitment too in the search for genuine disarmament. No one disputes France's major role in the negotiations to ban chemical weapons, to eliminate anti-personnel mines and to extend the Non-Proliferation Treaty indefinitely. Let no one doubt France's determination to ensure, in 1996, the success of the negotiations on the definitive, comprehensive and verifiable ban on nuclear testing. It was the first to speak out for the zero option. Today I wish to confirm that, once its final series of tests is completed next spring, France will sign the Protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga establishing a South Pacific nuclear-free zone.

Commitment, too, in the affirmation at the United Nations of a universal conscience, reflected in legal instruments and in programmes of action. It is in the vast area of human rights and solidarity among peoples that the irreplaceable nature of our Organization is most marked.

The world has changed in 50 years. In the past six, it has undergone a mutation that is perilous and yet brings hope. Let us help the United Nations adapt to this new world and play its role there effectively.

Let us make the Security Council more representative by enlarging the circle of its permanent members to include Germany, Japan and some large States from the South. Let us learn from our successes, as from our failures, by developing preventive diplomacy at the regional level and by increasing the rapid response capability of our Organization in the humanitarian and military spheres.

Let us seriously reflect together on the multilateral institutions of development aid: the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations agencies and programmes. France, which will preside over the Group of 7 in 1996, will make the effectiveness of such aid a major theme at the summit in Lyons.

The world has changed. So, too, has the third world. Let us take into account the differentiation that has gradually become more marked between the countries that enjoy strong growth and attract foreign investment and those that are in difficulty and at risk of being marginalized. The struggle against exclusion must be taken up at the international level as well. Let us concentrate a greater share of bilateral and multilateral aid on the least developed countries, particularly those in Africa. Today, as we have all seen, Africa is making progress. Let us help it to succeed.

Let us do better in addressing problems that are becoming more serious: movements of populations, environmental degradation, major endemic diseases, drugs. Without neglecting emergency aid, let us restore greater emphasis on the search for long-term solutions by assigning a central place to structural policies and their financing.

Concentrating official development assistance on the least-developed countries and refocusing on long-term policies are the two main areas which the necessary adaptations must address. Increasing the effectiveness of development assistance means pursuing these reforms with all the actors — multilateral and bilateral, public and private. We will succeed only if we are ambitious, determined and, above all, united in a comprehensive and coherent approach.

The proposals which France is presenting today, as contained in the statement that we have distributed, will be developed in the months ahead at the United Nations and with all our partners, especially those in the European Union and in the Group of 7, our partners in the French-speaking world and those which are emerging as pillars of tomorrow's world. For the new approach needs to be based on a real consensus, which we must build together.

Fifty years after it was drafted, the aims set forth in our Charter have lost none of their relevance: peace and disarmament, democracy and development, the promotion of human rights and the fight against the great scourges that threaten mankind. In these 50 years, a body of common values has gradually come to be asserted, thanks to the United Nations.

Today, we must focus our efforts on the adaptation and renewal of our Organization, above all by giving it the resources to operate. The temptation to disengage threatens the very existence of the United Nations. It is

not acceptable that many countries, particularly the foremost among them, should let their arrears pile up, thereby bankrupting an Organization to which all the world's Heads of State and Government have come, in an unprecedented event, to affirm its irreplaceable nature on this, its anniversary day. The world needs solidarity, and yes, it needs the United Nations.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I thank the President of the French Republic for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Jacques Chirac, President of the French Republic, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Thomas Klestil, Federal President of the Republic of Austria

The President: The Assembly will next hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Thomas Klestil, Federal President of the Republic of Austria.

His Excellency Mr. Thomas Klestil, Federal President of the Republic of Austria, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Klestil: The fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations is marked by a fascinating yet irritating contradiction. Many of the States Members of the United Nations believe that this jubilee is taking place at one of the most difficult moments of its history. Crisis is the word of the day. At the same time, more heads of State and Government are assembled here than ever before and more human beings, watching this gathering from every corner of the world, are convinced that the United Nations is indispensable to the very survival of mankind.

Ever since the first moments of its existence, the United Nations has been torn between idealism and power politics, between solidarity and egoism. It has always mirrored the state of the world, but at the same time it has been much more than the sum total of national interests. But the most fateful contradiction was already present at its creation. It was to be a community of nations, but the famous opening words of the Charter read: "*We the peoples*".

The history of the United Nations is the perpetual attempt to bring the world Organization closer to the people and to forge it into a genuine community of humankind. On the Organization's fiftieth birthday, the United Nations Members assembled here today sense more than ever the growing need to transcend the confines of the nation-State.

The experience of the first half-century of our Organization has shown, time and again, that people are ahead of their Governments. And the burning problems on the eve of the twenty-first century — the environment, development, human rights, population growth — force us to go beyond our traditional methods of international cooperation and crisis management. Thus, the time has come for a new beginning.

As the only instrument for global action, the United Nations has to accomplish a swift transition. Its primary role is to be open — open to new realities in a multifaceted world, open to new social and cultural aspirations and open to a dramatic change in paradigms. The profound transformations of our time, the rapidly growing importance and power of non-State actors — such as the media, religious groups or business communities — and the growing role of civil society demand a new dimension of international cooperation.

Wherever this process of reform may lead us we should never forget that the creation of the United Nations, 50 years ago, was an act of faith — and its renewal also has to be an act of faith. There is, however, a significant difference: today's faith in the United Nations is based not only on the values and principles we all share, but also on the record of half a century of remarkable achievements — and, of course, of numerous shortcomings.

We can, and we must, learn the lessons from the tragedies that have occurred — and still continue to occur — in many parts of the world. We have to make it clear that no country, no one, shall be allowed to hide behind a wall of sovereignty and silence when human rights are violated — and no offence against humanity must remain unpunished.

The more we are ready to pool our sovereignty — and the European Union is a shining example of this development — the better we achieve these goals. And the more nations unite, the better for national and for human security.

Growing unity, to last, requires the eradication of misery, poverty and social injustice — and equal opportunities for all. Only a strong world Organization will be able to meet these challenges.

There is no better way to celebrate the founding of our Organization than to make it efficient and financially viable. It is most urgent that we recognize the need for reform — and it is most vital that we act quickly. For this we need political will and determination; we need a United Nations system that is universal and competitive; and we have to give it the necessary financial means.

All Member States must shoulder their obligations under international law to contribute to the expenses of the Organization. The money we devote to peace-keeping, preventive diplomacy, resettlement of refugees and the monitoring of human rights helps to prevent future catastrophes whose cost would be far greater.

My country, Austria, is one of the three headquarters of the United Nations. From Vienna the world Organization fights against drug abuse and organized crime, controls nuclear energy and assists development for people in need. We are proud to host such important United Nations activities in our country.

We stand ready to join others in preparing our Organization for a new era on this planet. We trust, Mr. President, that under your guidance, with the continued assistance of all United Nations staff, and with the unrelenting energy of our Secretary-General, this gathering will give a decisive impetus to this undertaking. History and the future are on the side of the United Nations.

The President: I thank the Federal President of the Republic of Austria for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Thomas Klestil, Federal President of the Republic of Austria, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Constantinos Stephanopoulos, President of the Hellenic Republic

The President: The Assembly will next hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Constantinos Stephanopoulos, President of the Hellenic Republic.

His Excellency Mr. Constantinos Stephanopoulos, President of the Hellenic Republic, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Stephanopoulos (*interpretation from French*): I still vividly recall the founding 50 years ago of the United Nations. It was an event which strongly impressed all of us, and we placed many hopes in the new international Organization which was the successor to the League of Nations.

My country, Greece, was emerging from the war, and from triple enemy occupation which followed, emerging destroyed and bloodied. Its people wanted to look to the future with optimism and with the certainty that a new era would dawn for it and for all of mankind. We wanted to believe that the era of wars, of bombings, executions, famines, and the other ills plaguing men were consigned to the past. The great Powers had taken firm and definitive decisions. Security and peace were going to prevail at last. Democracy was going to govern the destiny of nations, and the new international Organization was going to settle the disputes which could emerge among them.

Through its authority, the United Nations would make good the principles of international law throughout the world, as well as respect for human rights, which were to be the subject of a Universal Declaration. The Organization would also contribute to economic development and cooperation between peoples, and would take all necessary measures to avoid falling into the errors of the past, thus avoiding the weaknesses of the League of Nations. What great hopes we cherished at the time!

Since then, 50 years have elapsed, and we have become more realistic. Wars have not ceased — nor have the crimes which come in their wake, and misfortunes of peoples have resulted. International norms, if they are deprived of the possibility of implementation, have turned out to be unable to impose themselves — and democratic principles as well as human rights are often deliberately ignored and are replaced by interests and by opportunism.

But then one might wonder: Has nothing been done over these 50 years? No, it would be wrong to assert that. For indeed, many things have been achieved — although, perhaps, not as much as we would have hoped.

The primary objective — which is that of preserving new generations from the scourge of war — has been partially achieved. Thanks to what has been called the balance of terror among the Powers — but also thanks to the existence of the United Nations — it has been possible to avoid having the cold war transformed into a new global conflict. The United Nations has always been a forum for discussion and conciliation, and has been

able to adopt significant resolutions which have not all remained a dead letter — quite the opposite.

Nevertheless, it is true that it has been impossible to avoid regional wars which were unleashed throughout the world. It is true that the responsibility for this does not fall on the United Nations — which did not have, and still does not have, the possibility to ensure the implementation of its own resolutions unless the great Powers reach agreement and give it the necessary means to do so. That said, one might perhaps note that the Organization has been lacking in firmness in the application of the just decisions which it has taken. However, insisting on its resolutions would have constituted strong moral pressure, which would have been all the more effective if the Organization had persevered consistently and firmly.

Cyprus is a striking example of the inability of the Organization to firmly and decisively condemn an act of military aggression that was followed by occupation, which still continues. The initial resolutions of the Security Council and of the General Assembly were not applied, and we have had to endure a military occupation which has been continuing for over 20 years.

We must in the most absolute and firm terms condemn not only the use of force but also the threat of its use, which also constitutes a flagrant violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Unfortunately, such cases have occurred quite recently. I refer, in saying this, to the threat of war which a Member State, through a decision of its National Assembly, made to Greece if it were to apply the provisions of the Convention on the Law of the Sea. What is astounding and totally inadmissible here is that this threat was not formulated to ward off an illegal act, but to prevent a perfectly legitimate act.

The efforts made by the United Nations have been more effective for economic development and cooperation between peoples — efforts which in many cases have been crowned with success. It also goes to the credit of the United Nations that it has made a firm proclamation of the need to respect and protect human rights, which, thanks to the policy followed by the United Nations, have been recognized and respected even in countries where they were in the past flagrantly violated. Doubtless, a great deal remains to be done — even in this area.

Strengthening the effectiveness of the United Nations would be to the advantage of all the members of the international community, which would then be acting within the framework of a system that would have full respect for the norms and principles of international law and in which the rule of the strongest would not be able to prevail.

In conclusion, I should like most sincerely to express the hope that the great and noble objectives of this Organization, the fiftieth anniversary of which we are celebrating, will be realized as soon as possible.

The President: I thank the President of the Hellenic Republic for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Constantinos Stephanopoulos, President of the Hellenic Republic, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Mircea Ion Snegur, President of the Republic of Moldova

The President: The Assembly will next hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Mircea Ion Snegur, President of the Republic of Moldova.

His Excellency Mr. Mircea Ion Snegur, President of the Republic of Moldova, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Snegur *(spoke in Romanian; English text furnished by the delegation)*: The important international event that has brought us together has a profound historical significance. Shaken by the horrors of the Second World War and guided by the firm conviction that such apocalyptic cataclysms should never happen again, the free nations and their spiritual leaders laid the foundation of the United Nations 50 years ago.

From this perspective, the first words of the Charter — "We the peoples of the United Nations" — are a natural expression of the world community's feeling of shared responsibility for the destiny of humankind.

At the present time, the international community is at a crossroads. An imperative on its agenda is the conception of a new world. It is probably the first time in history that we perceive the world as the common heritage of humankind and war as a crime, inequality as an injustice, and ecological degradation as a joint responsibility.

Among the objectives of the world community, priority is given to those that aim at the creation of a new

international system of political and economic relations. In this context, a fundamental role is attributed to the United Nations. Is the United Nations ready to assume such a role? This is a question every Member State has to answer.

The end of the cold war has given rise to hope in this respect. The United Nations has achieved remarkable results, especially over the last few years: peaceful environments introduced in Cambodia, Namibia, El Salvador and Mozambique; assistance in democracy-building to a number of States in different parts of the world; and the adoption, by consensus, of a significant number of documents and resolutions, to name but a few of these successes.

To do away with the structural and organizational deficiencies within the United Nations and to increase its positive impact, the Member States have introduced a number of initiatives aimed at revitalizing the United Nations and its capacity to adapt to the new realities. The Republic of Moldova supports the Organization's efforts to reform the Security Council and the restructuring of the United Nations Secretariat, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council and so on. We hope that these initiatives will be successful and that as a result the United Nations will be stronger and more efficient.

In another line of thinking, we consider it necessary to consolidate international law and to establish a new international legal order. At the same time, the need for a new legal framework for the post-cold-war period is becoming more and more evident. In this respect, it would be useful, we think, to deepen some of the existing concepts of international law, such as sovereignty, statehood and the competence of international organizations in general and, in particular, in correlation with the principle of self-determination. In our opinion, if these objectives are achieved, international law in the twenty-first century will become the language of international relations and will contribute to overcoming explosive situations such as those created artificially, and sometimes inspired and supported from abroad, around minority problems.

The Republic of Moldova became a Member of the United Nations immediately after gaining its independence. We took this step with the deep conviction that in the company of peace-loving nations and within the United Nations, we would succeed in building, faster and on a more solid foundation, a democratic and prosperous country, an independent and indivisible one, without foreign armies deployed on its territory.

After more than three years of membership, we find with satisfaction the advantages of our cooperation with the United Nations. We continue to count on the support that the United Nations can give us in urging the withdrawal, and in monitoring the withdrawal, of foreign troops from the territory of our country.

In conclusion, I should like to assure the Member States of our Organization that, in pursuing the complex task it has assumed — to build a peaceful, prosperous and democratic world — the United Nations will find in the Republic of Moldova a partner with conviction, true to the international responsibilities it has taken on.

The President: I thank the President of Moldova for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Mircea Ion Snegur, President of Moldova, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Ion Iliescu, President of Romania

The President: The Assembly will next hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Ion Iliescu, President of Romania.

His Excellency Mr. Ion Iliescu, President of Romania, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Iliescu (*interpretation from French*): Half a century of existence would seem to be an occasion for laudatory statements, even in the life of an international organization such as the United Nations. However, I believe that a gathering of more than 150 Heads of State and Government should be the occasion, not just for festive speeches, but also for framing clear answers to the fundamental questions that billions of citizens of this planet ask themselves each and every day, expecting us statesmen to come up with concrete solutions.

Are we to live in peace, or is the scourge of war still fiendishly lurking over our fate?

Shall we live in a more prosperous world, or shall we plunge deeper and deeper into the abyss of poverty?

Shall we live in a world capable of restoring to human beings their full dignity and creative powers, or shall we continue to watch impotently the waste of new generations, undermined by disease, famine, promiscuity, hatred and the lack of moral perspective?

Shall we all be contemporaries of the twenty-first century, or will history and civilization on Earth irreversibly splinter along the dividing lines of development?

Certainly, such questions are disconcerting. However, no one has a ready-made answer to them. That is why, perhaps, voices may be heard arguing that this is not the time to even ask these questions, here in the United Nations, as they do not fall within the purposes of our Organization.

To see that they really are wrong, we need only recall the hopes that animated the spirit and the work of the founding fathers of the United Nations.

In 1945, when we emerged from the inferno of the Second World War, the creation of a world in which the experience of total war could never be repeated was by no means an idealistic goal but the very essence of the endeavour to set up an organization with a universal vocation.

The prosperity of peoples achieved through cooperation was not merely the formula of some daydreamers, but the rationale behind an international body meant to constitute an orderly space for moral and legal values to govern the manifestation of the freedom of creation of human civilization in all its diversity.

International order based on legal norms, even if administered under the authority of the privileged club of the permanent members of the Security Council, represented the embodiment of reason and of the hope that the world would never again fall prey to the demons of hatred and destruction.

Fifty years later, the relevance of those original questions remains unaltered.

Is this a reason to proclaim the failure of the United Nations?

Perhaps those who are rushing to proclaim it as such should recall, before pronouncing verdict, how much the experience of the past 50 years of the United Nations existence has mattered for the legitimacy of these questions; how much it has meant to the newly emerged States on the world map that there existed a forum for the assertion of their identity and for the establishment of standards for civilized behaviour in international relations; how much the United Nations has meant for the formulation of discourse and for the practical achievement of the communication, negotiation and discussion of crucial issues of the contemporary world, such as the regime of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, the identification and legal condemnation of armed aggression, the conservation of the cultural heritage of humanity and the building of the basis for cooperation in the name of development.

Certainly, the results do not yet respond to all needs and expectations. That is why I believe that our most important duty now, on the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, is to make the chance of a new beginning come to fruition.

Released from the fetters of bipolarity and of the cold war, the international system has regained its natural freedom of movement. Instead of ending, history is in fact starting again.

Concomitantly, however, all the problems that seemed forgotten or that had long been ignored, apparently at no cost, have emerged anew, such as the painful and ever growing gulf between "those who have and can" and "those who cannot have" created by the unequal development of the different regions of the world, by the accelerated destruction of the planetary environment, the sharp reduction in vital resources and the resurgence of violence nurtured by intolerance and disregard for fundamental human rights and freedoms.

In supporting the draft Declaration proposed for adoption by our General Assembly, I should like to emphasize the importance of the chapter devoted to development and, above all, to the measures required to fill the gap between rich and poor countries, the fundamental problem of global stability.

We have the chance of a new beginning. The United Nations has a very full agenda for the twenty-first century. What we can do, even as of today, is to review its functional structures, mechanisms and architecture in order to render them capable of addressing those issues. Therefore, I propose for the coming year a special General Assembly session to be dedicated to the structural preparation of the Organization for the agenda of the twenty-first century.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I thank the President of Romania for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Ion Iliescu, President of Romania, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Captain Valentine E. M. Strasser, Head of State, Chairman of the National Provisional Ruling Council and Secretary of State for Defense of the Republic of Sierra Leone

The President: The Assembly will next hear an address by His Excellency Captain Valentine Strasser, Head of State, Chairman of the National Provisional Ruling Council and Secretary of State for Defense of the Republic of Sierra Leone.

His Excellency Captain Valentine E. M. Strasser, Head of State, Chairman of the National Provisional Ruling Council and Secretary of State for Defense of the Republic of Sierra Leone, was escorted to the rostrum.

Captain Strasser: Fifty years ago, after the guns fell silent, 800 delegates from 50 States, assembled in San Francisco, recognizing that future generations must never again face the lessons of 1945, signed the United Nations Charter document.

Securing a safer future and promoting the rights and freedoms of every living individual were the visions of those founding leaders.

Today, 135 additional States are members of this democratic organ, embracing almost every single State on this planet. Five decades on, the dreams of those delegates to the original San Francisco Conference are still shared by every single delegate here in New York.

The world has changed; giant nations are no longer confronting each other with deadly weapons; the iron curtain has given way to closer cooperation and the threat of nuclear annihilation has receded. Giant economic blocs are emerging and one-time arch enemies are today close allies.

These developments are parallel with the struggle for peoples under colonialism. Hardly any former colonial territory had achieved complete independence 50 years ago. But today, there is not a single State under colonial domination as the United Nations turns 50.

The resolution of ancient and emerging new conflicts and the provision of humanitarian aid to the millions of hungry and dying peoples of the world are problems that the United Nations, through its agencies, has grappled with.

These are remarkable achievements though, sadly, they have been restricted to the richer nations in the North; the ripples have yet to make a significant impact on the poorer small nations in the South.

While the wealthier North enjoys stability, democracy and economic prosperity, increased productivity, expanded markets and job opportunities, the under-developed poor wallow in debt, famine, instability, disease and death. Unfairly depressed commodity prices and a huge debt overhang threaten recovery for third-world developing economies. Capital and investment diversions to newly liberated Eastern Europe has left the crippled economies of the world's poorest starved.

Africa's debt alone has moved from a staggering $200 billion in 1993 to $211 billion in 1994. Real per capita aid has fallen since 1991 and sub-Saharan Africa's share of direct foreign investment for developing nations has hit a mere five per cent. The level of overseas development cooperation is at its lowest ever. These imbalances are creating new tensions and divisions in Africa.

From Kigali to Monrovia, the dark continent is beleaguered with armed conflicts. Africa's armed movements, coups toppling democracies, are the results of acute poverty. Insurgencies threaten democracies and today armed guerrillas are a threat to the envisaged democracy in Sierra Leone. Democratic elections are billed for the first half of next year but there is speculation that armed activities may disrupt the entire process.

Early in March last year, noting the serious security situation which had the potential to complicate the Liberian peace process and destabilize the entire subregion, the Secretary-General appointed Ambassador Dinka, an Ethiopian, as his Special Envoy to Sierra Leone.

Five hundred thousand people are displaced and 200,000 more have fled their homeland. Disease and hunger in the camps kill many daily. Refugees and displaced persons are desperate for relief.

Rural community dislocations have left the entire electoral process with technical complexities and made free and fair democratic elections a lot more expensive.

With a dreadful guerrilla campaign confronting an International Monetary Fund adjusted economy, an absence of substantial donor funding will kill democracy in Sierra Leone. Guerrillas who kill peasants in remote villages, shoot cattle, set huts on fire, use drugs and teach 12-year-olds to carry AK47s are today's terrorists; they are a threat to Africa's democratization and they must be isolated. Insurgents who sit and talk with Governments must be urged to drop their lethal weapons and make peace.

Mr. President, I salute, through you, the Secretary-General, the Secretariat and all earlier Secretaries-General for 50 years of dedicated service.

Let us make the United Nations leaner and stronger and keep alive the vision of its founding leaders.

The President: I thank the Head of State, Chairman of the National Provisional Ruling Council and Secretary of State for Defense of the Republic of Sierra Leone, for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Valentine E. M. Strasser, Head of State, Chairman of the National Provisional Ruling Council and Secretary of State for Defense of the Republic of Sierra Leone, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Fernando Henrique Cardoso, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil

The President: The Assembly will next hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Fernando Henrique Cardoso, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil.

His Excellency Mr. Fernando Henrique Cardoso, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Cardoso (*spoke in Portuguese; English text furnished by the delegation*): Let me say how proud Brazil is to see a distinguished representative from Portugal presiding over this historic session.

Fifty years ago, the delegates who signed the San Francisco Charter hoped to be creating a better world, one in which peace would be made possible through institutions capable of ensuring a high spirit of cooperation among peoples.

Like any other human endeavour, the United Nations has witnessed both success and failure. Throughout its existence, however, something very precious has been preserved: a feeling of hope. It is now time to renew it.

What do our peoples expect of us today? What would they want us to do for the United Nations?

I am sure that the answer to these questions is unequivocal: they would want the United Nations to be the guardian of the principles and rules that govern relations among States; they would want the United Nations to enforce them and guarantee that they be complied with, thereby providing a firm basis for the international order. They would want the United Nations to have effective instruments to promote conflict prevention and resolution as well as equitable forms of development.

It is an aspiration of all mankind that the United Nations be permanently engaged in the protection of human rights and in the fight against all forms of discrimination and tyranny.

We are living in better times than 50 years ago. By freeing the international agenda of the tensions generated by ideological confrontation, the end of the cold war created the conditions for a growing convergence of values, with democracy, economic freedom and social justice at centre stage.

New opportunities for international cooperation have emerged. The world conferences that the United Nations has been sponsoring — on environment, population, women, human rights, social development — have as a unifying theme the search for decent standards of living for all peoples and for each individual human being. Human advancement is therefore at the core of the international debate.

Beyond the issues addressed by these conferences, contemporary life presents challenges worthy of the attention of the United Nations.

This is a forum in which we should, within the complex context of globalization, work to overcome a persistent situation of social and economic inequalities giving rise to hopelessness and a feeling of exclusion. The goal of sustainable development must not be abandoned.

We must go from words to action so that peoples may be able to confront their divisions and so that people may be able to find in the United Nations a symbol of hope.

We must also work to make it possible for the extraordinary progress brought about by science and technology to be disseminated, for the benefit of all peoples.

Regarding international peace and security, the role of the United Nations will always be irreplaceable. In other issues, the United Nations will help us think together, guide decisions and create new patterns of legitimacy.

In all areas, our peoples expect from their respective leaders that we be able to maintain a constant dialogue based on truly universal values, a dialogue that can inspire the various regional institutions, and all nations individually, to work towards peace, development and cooperation.

Each one of our countries should contribute to ensuring that our Organization has the material means to carry out the tasks with which we ourselves have entrusted it. It is inadmissible that the United Nations is undergoing its worst financial crisis precisely when the leaders of the whole world are gathered to reaffirm their commitment to the United Nations Charter.

Let us be frank. We are celebrating this fiftieth anniversary with an underlying feeling of ambiguity, as we see the United Nations forced to resort to expediency in order to cover its huge deficits. This situation can paralyse our Organization just when its prospects look the brightest. We must find a lasting way out of this impasse.

I have come here today to reaffirm the Brazilian commitment to fight for a stronger, more active United Nations. This is not a new commitment, but one that reflects the history of Brazil's participation in this Organization. It has been a history of engagement, a history of the pursuit of peace and development, a history that makes us willing now to assume greater responsibilities in the deliberations of the United Nations.

This is the time to commemorate the renewal of the ideals of justice and peace which 50 years ago, led to this great creation of the human spirit that is the United Nations.

The President thanked the President of the Federative Republic of Brazil for his statement; His Excellency Mr. Fernando Henrique Cardoso, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Le Duc Anh, President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

The President: The Assembly will next hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Le Duc Anh, President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

His Excellency Mr. Le Duc Anh, President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Le Duc Anh (*spoke in Vietnamese; interpretation provided by the delegation*): It is my particular pleasure, on behalf of the State and the people of Viet Nam, to attend the Special Commemorative Meeting for the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. Over the past 50 years the United Nations has steadily grown. Its growth has been closely linked with the struggle of peoples for the right to self-determination and for the fundamental purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, namely international peace and security, development and prosperity for all nations, freedom and equality among nations whether large or small, sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-interference in the internal affairs of States and the peaceful settlement of disputes. These purposes and principles of the United Nations constitute common values of all mankind; all nations and peoples hold the same responsibility to preserve and uphold them. Today, when international exchanges and interactions are taking place with an ever growing intensity, scope and complexity, adherence to these fundamental purposes and principles takes on particular importance.

Paradoxically, just when mankind has acquired the technology in effect to reduce the distance between the Earth and other celestial bodies, the gap between the rich and the poor has widened alarmingly. Every day, we continue to witness the human tragedy of countless innocent people who are victims of wars, conflicts, economic embargoes, epidemics and the scourge of drugs. As a nation that experienced the horrible famine of 1945 and several decades of the ravages of war and embargo, the Vietnamese people know all too well the sorrow and pain of war as well as the harshness of economic embargo and the deprivations of poverty. We therefore feel deep empathy with the sufferings and losses of other peoples and individuals. From this rostrum, let me join my voice to the earnest call for the international community to do its utmost for the enjoyment by all individuals and nations in the world of their fundamental rights to a life in peace, equality and development and to

good economic and social relations among States and peoples.

The urgent tasks before us are to eradicate hunger, alleviate poverty and create jobs; to uphold the right of women to equality and implement the right of children to care and protection; and to ensure respect for fundamental human rights alongside respect for the sovereignty, security and development of every nation. We also need to substantially cut down military expenditures, eliminate weapons of mass destruction, decrease the trade in arms and move towards the termination of arms production and trade, reduce and write off the debt of poor countries, and increase investments for development and for the protection of the environment.

What has been achieved by the United Nations over the past 50 years in the fields of the maintenance of international peace and security, assistance to the process of decolonization, promotion of friendly relations and cooperation for development among nations, and promotion of environmental, cultural, educational and humanitarian activities is indeed remarkable. However, the shortcomings of our Organization are by no means small. In order to discharge its mission successfully, the United Nations itself should be revitalized. First and foremost, it should be turned into a democratic organization in which relations among Member States as well as between the United Nations and each Member State are based on democracy and equality. The General Assembly must truly be the highest authority of the United Nations, responsible to mankind for all questions related to international peace and security, cooperation for development and other global issues. Agencies affiliated with the United Nations also need to be renewed, and should be made to operate more effectively, with greater dynamism and transparency, within the framework of the United Nations Charter and General Assembly resolutions.

It is a felicitous coincidence that 1995 is also the year when we commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, today the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. Over the last 50 years, the Vietnamese people have brought to bear their tradition of unity, self-reliance and resilience, enduring untold suffering and overcoming countless hardships and sacrifices to defend the independence of their motherland, gradually building for themselves a life of well-being, freedom and happiness. We are committed to the implementation of an independent, self-reliant and open foreign policy guided by the credo that Viet Nam wishes to befriend all countries in the international community, and strives for peace, independence and development. We have achieved encouraging results in this regard.

On this occasion, allow me to express my sincere gratitude to all countries and international organizations, to His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali and to the specialized agencies for their sympathy and valued assistance to Viet Nam. Viet Nam is committed to doing its utmost to make a worthy contribution to the lofty cause of the United Nations for peace, development, equality and justice, and for a finer world, as expressed in the motto of this special commemoration: "We the peoples of the United Nations ... united for a better world": a world without hatred or violence; a world of love and happiness.

The President: I thank the President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Le Duc Anh, President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President and Chief of State of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea

The President: The Assembly will next hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President and Chief of State of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea.

His Excellency Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President and Chief of State of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, was escorted to the rostrum.

President Obiang Nguema Mbasogo (*interpretation from Spanish*): Mr. President, I am deeply honoured to congratulate you on the high distinction that has been conferred upon you: that of directing the work of this important session of the General Assembly on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. This session will not only study current problems, but will evaluate the role of the Organization over the last 50 years.

We are at a crucial moment in the life of the Organization, which is now marking its fiftieth anniversary. A half century of existence means a great deal for an organization which was created to impose the will of mankind, after sufferings caused by war,

injustice, discrimination, poverty, underdevelopment and the undervaluing of the individual.

The creation of the United Nations was, accordingly, an act of conscience and an intention to reform on the part of nations which decided to stop trying to take the upper hand, in order to build a new world based on friendship, understanding, freedom, justice, tolerance, cooperation and love.

After 50 years, it is natural that a work created by man should be examined to see if it continues to respond to the evolution of man and the times. Due to this, this session should provide an opportunity to evaluate in depth the history of the Organization, with regard to what it has done, what it has not done, and whether its purposes and principles continue to be valid in this dynamic and constantly evolving world.

In our opinion, the United Nations has not changed its philosophy, after 50 years, nor has man, like his own Creator, stopped being man since he was created.

We believe that the United Nations is the reflection of human integrity, and is inspired by the humanitarian spirit of man, because its purposes and principles are to guarantee the freedom and dignity of man, his well-being, and the security, justice and peace of nations.

No one has been opposed to or will oppose these basic goals because this would mean that man was denying his very self.

What we need to question here is man's behaviour regarding his own work. What have the States led by us men done with respect to our own post-war commitments? What is the attitude of man towards society, and what methods have we adopted to implement the spirit of the United Nations?

We must look at ourselves in the mirror to answer this question, because the United Nations, in its capacity as an international institution, has no need to blame itself, because it represents, as an example, the Bible or the Koran for the inspiration of the Member States. The successes of the United Nations cannot be attributed to its officials. We, each Member State, make up the United Nations. It was thus understood by its founders when they decided that the Charter would begin with the sentence, "WE THE PEOPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS, DETERMINED TO ..." Hence, to the extent that we respect this Charter, we can add up the successes or failures of the United Nations. Therefore, responsibility lies entirely with the Member States.

Along the same lines, it is appropriate that we should ask ourselves the following questions: Can we say that we have ended wars between nations? Can we say that we have done away with colonialism, when there is still a great desire on the part of some to dominate others? Have we really been able to ensure the freedom of man and respect for his rights? Do we respect the independence, sovereignty, and equality of all nations? After 50 years, can we say that the nations of the world live in peace, that individuals have their dignity and that there is well-being for humanity?

Our overall reply is that a fair amount has been achieved but much remains to be done because we can see in various parts of the world that there are large groups of human beings living in poverty, due to the egoism of the wealthy or the irrational behaviour of Governments. Racial, ethnic and social discrimination prevail, as does terrorism and the degeneration of man through drugs, alcoholism, and sexuality, which, in his despair, lead to evil.

Relations among States and economic blocs are unequal, and reforms cannot be proposed in the present unjust economic world order. Blatant interference in the internal policy of other States has been observed, showing disdain for their sovereignty. Today the voices of the third-world countries can scarcely be heard because they are not given answers to their request that science, technology and the financial resources that are squandered be dedicated to the development of the world.

Decades have gone by in which the attention of the United Nations has been turned towards world disarmament, in order to guarantee international peace and security when, to this end, we must ensure the freedom and dignity of man, as well as his material and moral well-being.

Let us make the United Nations more realistic and change the attitudes that contradict the spirit of its Magna Carta. We must replace interference in the internal affairs of other countries with respect for the freedom, independence and sovereignty of other States. No one is the policeman of the other. Let us substitute the intolerance and superiority or inferiority complexes in our relations with dialogue, understanding and love. Let us replace the present mechanisms that strangle our relations with other mechanisms that involve more

equality, reduce dependence and promote the interdependence of States.

There is no one who can better fulfil the obligations imposed by the Charter than us, because we have all learned the lesson — but do not practise it in the proper way. However, some wish to put themselves forward as the best defenders of human rights and as exemplary democrats. No one is against human rights or democracy because these principles do not harm anyone. Human rights and democracy must be the result of natural and orderly development in each society, which must conform to the morality or the cultural heritage of each nation. Democracy and human rights should not become a passport for legalizing interference in the internal policy of other States.

Democracy and human rights are difficult to apply in underdeveloped societies which suffer from poverty, hunger and illiteracy. In short, the phrase "United Nations" exhorts us to unity, solidarity, mutual and sincere support, and not to confrontation or distrust.

While presenting the congratulations of the people of Equatorial Guinea to the international community, which today celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations, I cherish the hope that the present session of the General Assembly will herald new moves to strengthen the role of our Organization to create a better world with greater prosperity and solidarity.

The President: I thank the President and Chief of State of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President and Chief of State of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency General Maung Aye, Vice Chairman of the State Law and Order Restoration Council of the Union of Myanmar

The Acting President: The Assembly will next hear a statement by His Excellency General Maung Aye, Vice Chairman of the State Law and Order Restoration Council of the Union of Myanmar.

His Excellency General Maung Aye, Vice Chairman of the State Law and Order Restoration Council of the Union of Myanmar, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Aye: It gives me great pleasure to address this fiftieth anniversary Special Commemorative Meeting of the United Nations. I would like to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral on his election to the high office of President of the General Assembly. On this historic occasion, I wish to pay a special tribute to the successive Secretaries-General for their selfless efforts to promote international peace and security and the well-being of the peoples of the world. I would also like to express our appreciation to the dedicated men and women who have contributed to the cause of the United Nations.

Anniversaries offer not only occasion for celebration but also provide opportunity for reflection. This fiftieth anniversary marks a unique opportunity to review the achievements as well as the limitations of the United Nations. The new international situation in which we now find ourselves makes it all the more urgent to strengthen the Organization to meet the evolving challenges and problems.

The international community has changed considerably in the past 50 years; yet the Charter of the United Nations framed in June 1945 continues to be valid to this day. The principles enshrined in the Charter — the equality of sovereign States, territorial integrity, the political independence of States and the peaceful resolution of conflicts — must remain inviolate and be faithfully observed in international relations. Erosion of these fundamental principles will undermine the aims and purposes of the Organization. Any attempt to weaken the time-honoured and universally accepted principles of sovereignty, of non-interference in the internal affairs of States and of self-determination would be cause for serious concern. In the process of restructuring the United Nations, utmost care must be taken to ensure that the effectiveness of the Organization will be preserved and strengthened. It must not be allowed to become a tool of a few to impose their agenda on the international community.

As responsible Members of the United Nations we pledge ourselves to cooperate with the Organization to maintain international peace and security. We recognize that the security of each and every Member State is important. Seen from our perspective, security entails non-interference in internal affairs and freedom from external pressures. Security is synonymous with the basic right freely to choose one's own political, economic and social systems and to determine one's future at one's pace and in accordance with cherished values and ideals.

Only strict adherence to the fundamental principles of the Charter can assure nations of their security.

Myanmar fully subscribes to the purposes and principles of the Charter. We are of the view that the United Nations must remain the central element of the evolving international order. Notwithstanding its imperfections, the United Nations as a global organization represents the aspirations of the peoples of the world to a better tomorrow. It has generated in the people of Myanmar a sense of belonging to the global community. Myanmar attaches particular importance to the celebrations of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. A high-level National Committee established to coordinate commemorative celebrations on a national scale has been active throughout the year.

The United Nations today stands at a crossroads. Voices are being raised questioning the effectiveness of the Organization. The United Nations needs strong support and understanding if it is to weather the political and economic storms that batter and erode its foundations. There is no better alternative to the United Nations. In an increasingly interdependent world, the United Nations is the only forum for increased multilateral cooperation.

The anniversary is an opportune moment to rededicate ourselves to the purposes and principles of the Charter and to the spirit of the theme of the fiftieth anniversary, "We the peoples of the United Nations...united for a better world". I would like to reaffirm Myanmar's abiding faith in the United Nations as a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of universal peace and cooperation. I have come here to renew Myanmar's commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter and to pledge Myanmar's continued cooperation with the United Nations.

I deem it appropriate to conclude my address with a quotation from the preamble of the Charter of the United Nations which advises us all

> "to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours".

The President: I thank the Vice Chairman of the State Law and Order Restoration Council of the Union of Myanmar for his statement.

His Excellency General Maung Aye, Vice Chairman of the State Law and Order Restoration Council of the Union of Myanmar, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency The Right Honourable John Major, M.P., Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

The President: The Assembly will next hear a statement by His Excellency The Right Honourable John Major, Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

His Excellency The Right Honourable John Major, M.P., Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Major: The United Kingdom was present at the birth of the United Nations. Throughout its 50 years we have stood by the Organization and by our responsibilities in the Security Council. The United Kingdom today as we meet here is the largest contributor of troops to United Nations peace-keeping operations. British forces are serving in blue berets from Angola to Georgia, with over 8,000 British troops in Bosnia alone. So I speak to you this morning as a strong supporter of the United Nations, but also as a candid friend. I want the United Nations to be more successful in the future. It will be needed in tomorrow's world, and so change is necessary.

The General Assembly first met amid the rubble and gloom of war-damaged London. But since then the world has been transformed. The United Nations has grappled with aggression. It has helped either to make or to keep the peace. It has worked for arms control, and only days ago the United Kingdom, France and the United States agreed to sign the Protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga. An end to nuclear testing is now in sight as we move towards a comprehensive test-ban treaty in 1996.

Throughout the past 50 years the principles of the Charter have stood the test of time. But now I believe we need to look ahead. The world is changing, and I believe it is time for the United Nations to change with it. We need to confront challenges to peace and deal more effectively with the roots of crises. We need to encourage democratic and accountable government and protect the rights of the individual. We need to reduce poverty and protect the environment, and we need to tackle the evils of international crime, drug trafficking and terrorism.

That is a demanding agenda. To achieve it, we need a properly financed and efficient United Nations. I want change because I want the United Nations to succeed. Let me emphasize that point: I want change so that the United Nations can succeed. Some reforms have begun; many are needed. What is clear is that inaction is no longer an option. The threat to the future of the United Nations will not come from change: it will come from inertia.

There are questions that we must address: Is the United Nations spread too wide? I believe it is. Is there too much waste and duplication between different bodies? I believe there may be. Are the priorities right for the 1990s? I am not convinced yet that they are. As we form new bodies for new problems, do we close down those no longer needed? Not enough, I think — there are some bodies we could usefully scrap. Can we improve the planning, managing and financing of peace-keeping? I believe that we can. Is our machinery for preempting conflicts and disasters as good as it should be? I believe not.

There are other questions as well: Should the Security Council be enlarged? I believe that it should. The subject has been on the agenda for too long. It raises difficult questions, but the issues are clear and the decisions are needed.

Is the United Nations being efficiently managed? I am sure more could yet be done to apply the best modern practices, with funding allocated to the most efficient programmes.

Is perhaps too much time and energy being spent on ritual verbal battles brilliantly interpreted into six languages and then printed on the world's highest paper mountain? Of course it is — we know that is the case.

Last, but most urgent of all, financial reform. The United Nations is in a financial crisis. It is not sustainable for Member States to enjoy representation without taxation. Contributions should be paid promptly and in full, and arrears should be cleared. But this must be accompanied by a new focus on efficiency, and by modernizing assessment to reflect the changing capacity of Members to pay their dues.

I agree very strongly with the Secretary-General that we should have a special session of the General Assembly next year to address these issues.

I ask these questions because they need answers. I dare say some of them are controversial, but we need frank and honest answers now because the world needs the United Nations as much today as at any time in the past; but a United Nations that works; a United Nations using today's methods to address tomorrow's needs; a United Nations that shows its worth to the taxpayer in all our countries, for it is they who pay the subscriptions to the United Nations.

In that way I believe we can capture and can justify popular support for our Organization.

Today we face difficulties that we must overcome. At this commemoration, my hope is that we will find the will to do so.

The President: I thank the Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for his statement.

His Excellency The Right Honourable John Major, M.P., Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency The Right Honourable Sher Bahadur Deuba, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Nepal

The President: The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency The Right Honourable Sher Bahadur Deuba, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Nepal.

His Excellency The Right Honourable Sher Bahadur Deuba, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Nepal, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Deuba: To this great assembly of Heads of State and Government, the Secretary-General, distinguished representatives and to you, Mr. President, I bring the greetings of the Government and people of Nepal, as well as the best wishes of His Majesty King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev for the success of the fiftieth anniversary session of the United Nations.

On this historic occasion, allow me first of all to reiterate my country's deep and abiding commitment to the principles and purposes enshrined in the United Nations Charter, whose ideals of peace, justice and progress continue to sustain the hopes of humanity. For

a country which is the birthplace of the Buddha, the foremost of the apostles of peace and non-violence for over two and half millenniums, these ideals, together with the concept of tolerance, understanding and equality, are values which are rooted deep in our national psyche and culture. It is a tribute to the vision of the founding fathers of our Organization that the seminal ideas which have guided the United Nations in its first half-century should also prepare us for its second.

Sir Anerood Jugnauth (Prime Minister of Mauritius), Vice-President of the General Assembly, took the Chair.

Perhaps the greatest achievement of our Organization has been its ability to adapt to the changing conditions and work towards its goals even in the face of an inhospitable international environment. As a result, there is greater room for hope in the world today. The spectre of a global nuclear catastrophe which has haunted humanity since 1945 is less threatening now with the end of the cold war. The abhorrent practice of colonialism that once justified the subjugation of nations and peoples is no longer acceptable. The novel concepts of preventive diplomacy and international peace-keeping introduced by the United Nations have helped defuse international crisis situations and prepare the groundwork for peacemaking, the rewards of which are becoming increasingly visible in the once conflict-prone regions of the globe. Similarly, the Organization's functional approach to peace has provided economic relief to the less privileged regions of the world and restored human dignity to the neglected segments of our global society.

As we seek solace in these achievements during the Special Commemorative Meeting, we would not be casting aspersions on the abilities of the United Nations by suggesting that much more needs to be done as we approach the dawn of the next century. While we are currently caught in a dilemma between our efforts to forge a new world order and face the reality of global disorder, there is a strong need to reinforce some of its mechanisms to cope with the demanding times. These relate to expansion of the Security Council, a more efficient management of the Secretariat, and greater democratization of international relations by extending the authority of the General Assembly, truly the representative body of the United Nations.

There is also an equally palpable need to better coordinate the activities between our Organization and its programmes, funds, the specialized agencies and other international development institutions, particularly with an eye towards enhancing the role of grass-root movements and citizen groups. Lately these movements, focusing on social, gender, population, environment and human rights issues, have not only become a strong international force in their own right, but have also been justified in expecting more from this global institution. For its part, Nepal will support a coordinated examination of studies aimed at strengthening the Organization, particularly those measures which also seek to free it from the vagaries of its insecure financial base.

Ever since Nepal joined the United Nations, it has supported and participated actively in the peace-keeping and peace-building efforts of the Organization. Our efforts in this direction will continue as we look forward to participating in the new initiative for a stand-by United Nations force designed to enable it to respond to any call for assistance in time.

Nepal sees no substitute for a United Nations that is both robust in standing and responsive to the needs of global security and the progress of its individual member nations. With the current preoccupation of the Organization in many new civil and regional conflicts, its activities on the development side have been weakened. The much-talked-about peace dividend in a post-cold-war era has proved so far to be elusive, as the condition of the least developed and land-locked countries continues to decline. It would be unfortunate if things were to be left in their present state, especially when the developing countries with their weak economic base have to cater to the dictates of market mechanisms alone.

Today, nations seek social and economic development within a framework of political freedom and justice in which the rights of individuals to live in dignity are respected. It is therefore not enough for Governments to pay lip service to these principles: they have to deliver the goods to the people by lifting them up from dire economic conditions and providing them with political stability to enjoy the fruits of freedom and prosperity.

The United Nations exemplifies a global dream and has no peer in matching the aspirations of men and women everywhere. It is a dream of a world in which the strong and the well-to-do are comfortable with their power and seek to act with confidence and magnanimity. It is a dream in which the weak and the less fortunate can feel secure when seeking to work for greater international harmony. For this collective vision of our world, we in

Nepal continue to remain committed to the ideals of the United Nations.

The Acting President: I thank the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Nepal.

His Excellency The Right Honourable Sher Bahadur Deuba, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Nepal, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency The Right Honourable Hubert A. Ingraham, M.P., Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas

The Acting President: The Assembly will next hear a statement by His Excellency The Right Honourable Hubert A. Ingraham, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas.

His Excellency The Right Honourable Hubert A. Ingraham, M.P., Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Ingraham: We are now 50 years removed from that historic day when nations assembled for the purpose of uniting to address concerns over the human condition. Half a century later, we are presented with an appropriate opportunity to examine how well the United Nations has fulfilled its purpose.

In its 50 years, the United Nations has gained vast experience in virtually every field known to man, and its storehouse has served well those nations whose needs and desires fall within the parameters of the common programme of purposes and principles enshrined in its Charter.

Our theme, "We the Peoples of the United Nations ... United for a Better World", emphasizes that people, and the human condition, remain the highest priority of our civilization.

The Bahamas feels honoured to be an integral, contributing and well-served Member of the United Nations. For our part, we would wish for all of our sister States to enjoy, as we have been privileged to do, a strong commitment to parliamentary democracy and freedom from strife, tyranny and genocide. We further wish for all Members of this Organization to enjoy freedom from the social ills of abject poverty, disease and unemployment, upon which distress is wont to feed.

The United Nations was born out of the ruins of war and the determination of the great Powers of the day to insulate the world against a repetition of the disregard for life and property resulting from two world wars in the first half of this century. Fifty years later, the world is a very different place. The great Powers of 1945 have been joined in economic stature by new countries, including the vanquished of the world wars and other States, some of which had not come to political maturity in 1945.

Today we are threatened more by regional conflict than by global confrontation, and frequently the threats do not come from sovereign States but, instead, from religious and racial intolerance, ethnic hatred, international criminal cartels, natural disasters and development gone awry.

Indeed, as we celebrate our fiftieth anniversary, we must face squarely the threat of a new great war in which we are all engaged. The war of which I speak is that which is being fought in defence of the environment. This is of particular concern to small island developing States such as the Bahamas, a fragile, service-based, archipelagic ecosystem of global environmental significance.

It is useful to articulate the many achievements for which the United Nations has been responsible. Notable are the tremendous advances made in world health, including immunization and disease reduction, improved food production and delivery, improved shelter and general living standards for the poor and higher literacy rates in the world. Notable too, are initiatives to safeguard and promote the rights of women and children.

In our region, where the nefarious traffic in illicit drugs and the insidious erosion of society by powerful drug cartels are well known, we fully appreciate the importance of the United Nations role in galvanizing wide international support for the fight against the demons of avarice and death.

In supporting democracy, political freedom and respect for human rights, the United Nations has become the champion of millions of people everywhere. The democratization of Haiti and the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa are not only notable triumphs of the human spirit, but also testimony to this Organization's success in positively influencing even seemingly intractable internal crises in individual Member States.

Where terrorism, tyranny and genocide have been perpetrated against individuals, States and Governments, the United Nations has strengthened its resolve to take positive action. Permit me here to express special appreciation for the Blue Helmets and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Their untiring efforts to meet the urgent needs created by political persecution, civil war and regional conflict have been phenomenal. Today, greater and greater numbers of people are being displaced by famine, natural disasters and economic hardship, creating severe strains on the resources of receiving States, such as the Bahamas. It is appropriate — and I so recommend — that this body revisit the mandate of UNHCR with a view to providing assistance to those affected by these agents of displacement and misery.

The Bahamas is pleased to reiterate its commitment to the further strengthening of this Organization. It is our desire that the next five decades bear the fruit of our theme today: "We the Peoples of the United Nations ... United for a Better World". And in that regard, we hope for a world freed from the scourge of illicit drug traffic, relieved of the burdens created by uncontrolled migration, protected by greater environmental consciousness, enhanced through increased literacy and health standards everywhere, strengthened by Member States that fully honour their financial obligations to this body, encouraged that each organ and Member of this Organization will strengthen its symbiotic relationship for the benefit of mankind everywhere and, finally, we hope for a world liberated from poverty, disease, unemployment, racism, religious persecution, tyranny and strife.

The Acting President: I thank the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas for his statement.

His Excellency The Right Honourable Hubert A. Ingraham, M.P., Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Her Excellency Begum Khaleda Zia, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

The Acting President: The Assembly will next hear a statement by Her Excellency Begum Khaleda Zia, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

Her Excellency Begum Khaleda Zia, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, was escorted to the rostrum.

Begum Zia *(spoke in Bengali; English text furnished by the delegation)*: The United Nations has turned fifty. We are celebrating this landmark anniversary of the signing of the United Nations Charter to reaffirm its goals and rekindle its ideals.

As we observe this anniversary, we may pause to reflect on the circumstances in which this august body was founded after a terrible world war in the middle of this century. The goal was "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war", to enable mankind to live in peace and security with the common aim of striving for development and progress. The United Nations has had its share of successes and failures, but, there can be no thought of abandoning it because there is no alternative.

Our commitment to the United Nations is unswerving. We have always upheld and resolutely pursued the United Nations mandate for peace and development. As we salute the United Nations flag and pay tribute to those who wear the blue helmets of peace-keepers throughout the world, we take great pride in our record of being among the foremost troop-contributors dispersed over many conflict areas. We are ready to serve the United Nations cause through standby forces closely linked to both early-warning and preventive systems.

Bangladesh fully supports the reforms and restructuring of the main organ of the United Nations. I feel it is indeed ironic that when so many world leaders have gathered to solemnly pledge their commitment to the Charter of the United Nations, when it comes to making crucial decisions affecting the destiny of mankind, such decisions are made by a handful of countries.

Strengthening the rule of law is critical to preserving the security of smaller and weaker States. The enhanced role and contribution of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) thus assumes greater relevance. Measures for compulsory jurisdiction or arbitration through the ICJ or third-party mediation are therefore important.

While we are assembled here to celebrate the founding of this august body, over 40 million people in my country are facing poverty and destruction owing to deprivation of our rightful share of the waters of the Ganges River by India through unilateral withdrawal at Farakka. While withdrawal of water during the dry season causes serious drought, the release of excess water during the rainy season creates severe floods in a vast

area of Bangladesh. Besides the colossal loss in economic terms, this is causing serious degradation to the environment and to the ecology.

The Farakka Barrage has become an issue of life and death for us. Owing to obstruction of the natural flow of water upstream, a process of desertification is evident throughout the northern and western parts of Bangladesh. Vegetation is dwindling, salinity is spreading in the south, threatening industry and agriculture with ruin. Fish and animal resources are facing extinction. Innumerable people of various occupations who depended on the River Padma for their living are becoming unemployed. Many are being uprooted from their homes and hearths. As the whole world voices concern for the protection of the environment and human rights, at that very moment a big part of the population of Bangladesh is being pushed over to the threshold of poverty and destruction. This is a gross violation of human rights and justice.

I had mentioned this acute problem before this world body in 1993. Unfortunately, in spite of our best efforts, the problem still remains unresolved. I would like to call upon all of you gathered here today to help resolve this problem.

If we look around the world today at the numerous conflicts, big and small, at aggressions perpetrated against small States, at genocidal conflicts and "ethnic cleansing", and denial of the right of lower riparian countries to the water of common rivers, there are many who may question the justification of this world body.

Despite these drawbacks, mankind has not been able to evolve a more effective forum. The fiftieth anniversary offers the ideal opportunity to review its achievements and to look forward — to look forward to a strengthened and reinvigorated United Nations, a United Nations that has been restructured, attuned and democratized to meet the challenges of the next millennium.

The Acting President: I thank the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh for her statement.

Her Excellency Begum Khaleda Zia, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Klaus Kinkel, Vice-Chancellor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Klaus Kinkel, Vice-Chancellor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany.

His Excellency Mr. Klaus Kinkel, Vice-Chancellor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Kinkel *(spoke in German; English text furnished by the delegation)*: Fifty years ago, delegates from 51 nations, meeting in San Francisco to found the United Nations, gave the world a portent of reason, solidarity and hope. That same portent brings us together here today.

In looking back we have to admit that, unfortunately, history does not always follow the straight paths of reason, but it does give us opportunities for progress which sometimes border on the miraculous.

One such unique gift was the removal of the Berlin Wall and the barbed wire in Germany and throughout Europe. The ending of the East-West conflict freed the world from the fear of a nuclear inferno. It has relieved us of the burden of the arms race and given all nations new opportunities — for self-determination, peaceful cooperation and a sustainable global economic development. Yet many of the renewed hopes of peace attaching to those opportunities are still unfulfilled. Above all, we have been unable to bridge the gap between North and South, between rich and poor.

Today, on the threshold of a new millennium, we must learn the right lessons from the experiences gained over the last 50 years. We cannot change what lies behind us, but we can do better in the future. We must influence and shape what lies ahead. What is the challenge we are facing? Nothing less than to keep the Earth habitable for our children and grandchildren; to make sure that eight or ten billion people can live in humane conditions.

The German astronaut Thomas Reiter and his Russian colleague went for a five-hour-long walk in space last weekend. "The Earth is incredibly beautiful", both of them said after their walk. And I believe that it is our responsibility to see to it that the Earth continues to be incredibly beautiful.

Never was it so abundantly clear that the only choice open to mankind is to succeed together or to fail together. And that is why we must renew and strengthen

the covenant of San Francisco, the covenant for peace, human rights and development, for the joint survival of the human race.

Only if it charts its course by this compass will mankind be able to survive. For the world, the United Nations is without alternative. That is the truly important fact we have to grasp in the world Organization's jubilee year. Only then will we also muster the strength to carry out the necessary reforms. These reforms will have to succeed now. The United Nations must overcome its financial and structural crisis. However, if it is to do so it needs our support, and not just destructive criticism.

Let us settle our conflicts peacefully. Peace must finally be restored to the former Yugoslavia. Let us scrap and destroy weapons of mass destruction and other weapons, such as anti-personnel mines, which, day in and day out, kill or maim innocent civilians, including, unfortunately, many women and children.

We must not allow people to be murdered, tortured, violated or persecuted and expelled on grounds of race, faith or political conviction.

Let us combine our strength for the economic and social progress of the nations in a new partnership for development. Children all over the world must be immunized against disease, and they should be able to attend school. Let us protect the Earth, the oceans and the rivers from pollution.

Finally, let us pay our contributions, without which the United Nations cannot perform its vital functions. Here I should like expressly to welcome what President Clinton of the United States and others said yesterday on this subject.

Since the Second World War Germany has pursued the cause of peace and human rights. We have tied our destiny to that of a united Europe and have participated in the global campaign against poverty and underdevelopment. The ending of the East-West conflict brought us the unique gift of reunification. This imposes upon us a special responsibility for the concerns of the world Organization.

The United Nations can continue to count on Germany.

The Acting President: I thank the Vice-Chancellor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Klaus Kinkel, Vice-Chancellor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Désiré Vieyra, Minister of State for Coordination of Government Action of Benin

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Désiré Vieyra, Minister of State for Coordination of Government Action of Benin.

His Excellency Mr. Désiré Vieyra, Minister of State for Coordination of Government Action of Benin, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Vieyra (*interpretation from French*): It is a great pleasure for me to participate in this Special Commemorative Meeting on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, and to express the appreciation of the people and Government of Benin to those men and women whose historic vision made it possible, through the creation of the United Nations, to lay the foundations for the international legal order on 26 June 1945 in San Francisco.

This is a fitting time to pay a well-deserved tribute to successive Secretaries-General, whose determination and dedication to the cause of peace and the progress of humanity have contributed to the triumph of noble ideas, and to all the Secretariat staff for their commitment and dynamism.

I particularly wish to congratulate Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the first son of the African continent to occupy the position, both exacting and exciting, of Secretary-General, for his courage and his humanism, which have commanded the admiration of all.

The President returned to the Chair.

In Benin, where the values of democracy and political pluralism have prevailed since 1990, we have accorded this event all the importance that it merits, taking into account the hopes that the peoples of the whole world place in the capacity of the United Nations to meet the major challenges confronting humanity. For us, this celebration is an opportunity, above and beyond the festivities and the various events, to evaluate the 50 years of operations of the United Nations, with a view to making it more useful and more effective.

In spite of the long period of tension and the global rivalries of the cold war — fortunately a thing of the past — the universal Organization has stood the test of time and, during this turbulent century, has been able to take significant initiatives. States continue to exchange views on very diverse questions involving all sectors of human activity.

The United Nations, as it reaches the half-century mark, must commit itself with resolve to the fight against poverty. In this respect, we cannot fail to be pleased that at the World Summit for Social Development we finally overturned a sacrosanct principle to the effect that a country's social action must be determined by its economy. We shall now base our economies on the social sphere.

In this respect, I am gratified at the proclamation of 1996 as International Year for the Eradication of Poverty. Today Benin is striving, with the help of its development partners, to reduce the rate of infant and maternal mortality and to reduce illiteracy by placing particular emphasis on health and education.

In order that the United Nations may always be able to serve the peoples of the world, and in order that lasting peace may be achieved, we must strengthen the Organization's capacities with regard to the prevention of conflicts, the maintenance and strengthening of peace, and we must provide it with the means to accomplish its mission. In my view, the action of our Governments cannot succeed without the support of all the members of the international community, including civil society, the private sector and non-governmental organizations.

We must also support the vital role of the United Nations in mobilizing support for the well-being of humanity. It is especially in our interest to enable the Organization effectively to tackle the specific problems of the developing countries — in particular, those of Africa and the least-developed countries, whose recovery requires substantial efforts and resources.

Indeed, Africa, in spite of its human resources and its immense economic potential, is undermined and ruined by different afflictions. It was in recognition of the magnitude of the challenges to be met, both individually and collectively, that the Organization of African Unity adopted at Abuja the resolution that was to lead to the establishment of the African Economic Community, with a view to the integration of members' fragile national economies. This resolution cannot be implemented successfully without the unfailing support of the United Nations.

To speed up the development of that continent, so many times plundered and pillaged, there is a need to establish without delay the sort of Marshall Plan for which the Heads of certain African States, with Benin in the lead, are constantly calling. I believe that this plan should be the culmination of a series of measures to be taken by the international community with a view to ensuring not only that the commitments regarding Africa made in the framework of summits and conferences organized by the United Nations since the beginning of this decade are respected, but also that the Agenda for Development is implemented.

In 1945, Franklin Delano Roosevelt told his colleagues:

> "Friends, our goal is peace — not only the end of this war, but the end of all wartime."

The world has certainly evolved, but the United Nations Charter has lost none of its timeliness. We therefore remain confident in the Organization's capacity to realize the aspirations of all peoples to a world of solidarity, justice and peace.

The President: I thank the Minister of State for Coordination of Government Action of Benin for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Désiré Vieyra, Minister of State for Coordination of Government Action of Benin, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Datuk Abdullah bin Hadji Ahmad Badawi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malaysia

The President: I now call on His Excellency Datuk Abdullah bin Hadji Ahmad Badawi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malaysia.

His Excellency Datuk Abdullah bin Hadji Ahmad Badawi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malaysia, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Abdullah: The United Nations is 50 today, yet it remains an Organization beset with problems, both substantive and organizational. The United Nations has achieved much in the past, but confidence has waned in recent years in its ability to discharge its functions as mandated by its Charter.

If the United Nations is to proceed into the next millennium and remain relevant to the needs of its Members and the international community, and if it is to address in a comprehensive manner all issues relating to war and peace, economic growth and responsible governance, then restoring confidence in itself and rebuilding its image must remain its priority task and responsibility. While it is our right to expect the United Nations to achieve this objective, giving support and commitment to the United Nations must be our unshirkable responsibility.

Malaysia strongly believes that the United Nations should be the body to promote globalism and pluralism. It must stand clearly on the side of universal values in combating genocide and aggression. As the world approaches the next millennium, the United Nations must continue humanity's struggle against the elimination of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. Nuclear testing, above all, must cease immediately.

Peace and security cannot be built on arms reduction alone. Development focused on the eradication of poverty and the removal of bottlenecks towards global prosperity must remain the priority task and responsibility of the United Nations. In this role, the United Nations should not become an instrument for disciplining developing countries while allowing for power politics and global domination by a few powerful countries.

The buzz word during the general debate at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly and at this meeting since yesterday has been "reform", with the focus on the reform of the United Nations. In our view, there is a need for a comprehensive agenda for the reform of the multilateral system. Indeed, it is time for us to forge a new framework for multilateralism for the twenty-first century. This agenda should encompass the principal organs of the United Nations, including the Security Council and the International Court of Justice, as well as the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization.

The agenda must also acknowledge the important role and contribution of science and technology, the business sector and the non-governmental organizations. They have enriched multilateralism, contributed to the maintenance of international peace and security, and promoted the economic and social advancement of all peoples.

Scientists and businessmen have made immense contributions to the emergence of a global village. They have set up a network, a super-information highway, and facilitated financial and trade flows, which have made borders porous. As the scientists lead us into the era of cyberspace, we need to put in place a code of conduct that would regulate the flow of information. The United Nations must be in the forefront of cooperation in cyberspace to ensure the full involvement of the international community.

Yet, at the same time, the current activities of the United Nations have suffered as a result of financial constraints. The financial constraints have set in motion an exercise drastically to reduce expenditure on development in an arbitrary and rushed manner. While we welcome the convening of an emergency special session to address this issue, we would appeal to all Member States to honour their commitments by paying their subscriptions in full and on time.

In order to achieve these objectives, appropriate institutional changes are required. These include, first, the democratization of the Security Council through the expansion of its membership and a review of the veto with a view to its total elimination. Secondly, the General Assembly should play its rightful role as a forum in which sovereign equality prevails, including providing policy guidance to the Security Council. The Trusteeship Council could be disbanded. Thirdly, the Bretton Woods Institutions should return to their original mandates and take on board the new Powers on the geo-economic scene. Fourthly, the International Court of Justice should be revitalized with changes in its composition, including the discontinuation of allotting automatic seats to the veto-wielding Powers.

While countries recognize the reality of power politics and their application, particularly in the bilateral context, the reformed and restructured United Nations must no longer be the tool of any one country, irrespective of its power. Humanity must find succour and sustenance in this global institution, which must become the true vehicle for the promotion of multilateralism.

The President: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malaysia for his statement.

His Excellency Datuk Abdullah bin Hadji Ahmad Badawi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malaysia, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Amre Moussa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt and Special Envoy of the President

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Amre Moussa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt and Special Envoy of the President.

His Excellency Mr. Amre Moussa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt and Special Envoy of the President, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Moussa (*interpretation from Arabic*): I have the honour to make the following statement on behalf of President Hosni Mubarak, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

Fifty years ago, Egypt joined 50 other countries in witnessing the birth of the United Nations which was the birth of a new international order that was to be founded on the principles and the goals enshrined in the Charter we signed in San Francisco. One of the most important goals of that new international order was to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, in the wake of the horrors of the Second World War. It also aimed at achieving justice, equality, economic prosperity, social advancement and the protection of the sovereignty of States, as well as the realization of the aspirations of peoples after freedom and self-determination.

Today, we are gathered together here to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. This is a unique opportunity to assess our successes and our failures and to glean from our experiences the object-lessons which would shed light on the reasons behind such successes and failures and, thereby, help us chart, together, the road to the future.

The very preservation within the realm of the possible, of the principles and goals of the United Nations Charter was an achievement unto itself. The Charter remains today — as it has been throughout the past 50 years — true to its goals, lofty in its expression and clear in its principles. To the credit of this Organization is that it has been a source of hope, a torch-bearer and an element of construction.

On the basis of the Charter and within the framework of the United Nations, we have brought about decolonization and put an end to racial discrimination in its most brutal form, apartheid. We have been able to promote new theories for economic and social development and initiate international specialized action in a varied range of fields, such as agriculture, industry, science, health, the environment and many others. Together, we have started to organize international activities on land, in the air and at sea.

So, let us not be unfair in our assessment of the past 50 years. Much has been achieved.

However, the bright image is overshadowed by dark and murky clouds, the most ironic of which is that the United Nations stands on the verge of bankruptcy even as we celebrate its fiftieth anniversary.

However, this alone is not where the tragedy lies. The real tragedy is that despite our success in achieving decolonization, hegemony and policies of aggression continue to afflict the international scene. Despite our success in ending apartheid, racial discrimination and religious intolerance are still rife in many parts of the world. Despite our success in promoting many theories for development, economic imbalances persist due to the widening gap between North and South — a gap that portends the division of the world, for decades to come, into rich and poor, thus entailing migration, discrimination, terrorism, social ills, and a myriad of other adverse political effects. Despite our success in establishing political and security frameworks on the international and regional levels, to deal with issues such as disarmament and human rights, we still suffer from the proliferation of nuclear weapons and persistence in nuclear practices on the one hand, as well as from the lack of resolve when it comes to dealing with human rights, on the other hand. In fact, it is in these two areas specifically — nuclear disarmament and human rights — that serious political imbalances appear in the present and the emerging world orders alike. Very succinctly, we can put this down to the existence of double standards.

Such political and economic imbalances have led to a social imbalance that, undoubtedly, will lead, at the international level, to psychological aberrations that will impact negatively on future generations the world over.

While we celebrate 50 years of the world order that was established in the aftermath of World War Two and move closer to the beginning of the twenty-first century, mankind is sitting atop a volcano that is beginning to spew its lava.

Nevertheless, let us not slide into the quagmire of despair. Let us not waste our scientific achievements by

our political misconduct. Let us build up the credibility of the international order, in a manner that instills confidence amongst people. When we speak of peace, let us truly mean peace; when we speak of development, let us put it into effect; when we talk about human rights, let us refrain from resorting to double standards; and, when we speak of disarmament, let us do so without excepting anyone.

As we look to the future, let us arm ourselves with courage, with integrity and with fair play; let us free ourselves from double standards and from bias. As we celebrate the United Nations fiftieth anniversary, let us not blow out any candles, but light candles so that they may illuminate our path in these murky and dangerous times and enable us to reach the prosperous and stable future in which peace may reign supreme.

The President: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt and Special Envoy of the President for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Amre Moussa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt and Special Envoy of the President, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Ernesto Leal, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Ernesto Leal, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua.

His Excellency Mr. Ernesto Leal, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Leal (*interpretation from Spanish*): The United Nations emerged 50 years ago from the rubble of the Second World War. On this fiftieth anniversary we must strive for the resurgence of a renewed United Nations, with its principal aim, which is "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war", as stated in the Charter — but its principal aim should also be to contribute to development, to eradicate the poverty that affects many of our countries.

This Commemorative Meeting should not be simply one more anniversary of our Organization. It must mark an important step in the history of mankind. Anniversaries can be nothing more than commemorative dates if we do not do something concrete that would truly measure up to our own aspirations.

We should therefore, on this occasion, make a solid commitment to consolidate peace. I therefore wish, in this forum which has so often witnessed the horrors of war and human suffering, to make an appeal for the cessation of all international conflicts and controversies both current and potential.

A new era of peace in the world demands the development of a United Nations plan of action, with the full participation of the Secretary-General, aimed especially at promoting a peaceful solution to all of the controversies and differences that still persist and that can affect international peace or security. Every conflict resolved in the world will be a victory for peace.

The best tribute that we can pay to the United Nations Decade for International Law is to arrive at the centennial of the 1899 Peace Conference in The Hague, where the Convention for the Peaceful Settlement of International Conflicts of 1899 was agreed with a humanity in which dialogue will have prevailed over differences. All States Members of the United Nations must work for a humanity free of disputes or conflicts so that we can arrive at that third peace conference — which was referred to and proposed yesterday by the President of the Russian Federation — free of disputes, free of conflicts — so that we may enter the twenty-first century as the century of peace.

The time has also come to faithfully fulfil the commitment established in the Charter to promote the economic and social advancement of all peoples. We must, therefore, begin the United Nations' largest peace-keeping operation, that is, placing the human being at the centre of economic and social development. I wish also to call for a re-orientation of the structures of the United Nations towards the topic referred to yesterday by the Prime Minister of Japan — the subject of human security.

Development should be the other phase of the work of the next 50 years of the United Nations — a United Nations that looks towards the South, which is still poor and without resources, so the twenty-first century may also become the century of development. We face the great challenge of turning into reality the results of the world conferences on children, the environment, social development, population, human rights and women.

Like the United Nations, Nicaragua too, with the invaluable support of this Organization, has emerged from the ashes of war. Today we are advancing successfully towards a new order of democracy and

freedom in a spirit of national reconciliation. In that context, we have already requested the United Nations to observe the election that will take place next year in Nicaragua.

Nicaragua is also resolved to continue to participate in the decision-making process in the United Nations, which will define the direction of the Organization. Democracy is today a universal value that should guide our agenda permanently. We must be aware that without freedom, nothing will be possible.

Lastly, I believe that this fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations is the appropriate time for us to reaffirm our active commitment to the Charter of the Organization, for us to work towards a United Nations that is efficient, renewed in its values and reformed in its structures. It is time for us to allocate, at last, the well-known "peace dividends" to the progress of the emerging democracies and least developed countries — time for us to strengthen democracy with the fruits of sustainable development and not to leave the new or restored democracies alone in their fragile process of transition. This is the time for us to make of the United Nations a place of true universal representation, without exclusions of any kind — for us to forge, not only a preventive diplomacy, but also a true preventive democracy, which could contribute to anticipating problems, eliminating poverty and strengthening democratic institutions, so that we can form a peace operation, but this time against terrorism and drug-trafficking.

I do not wish to conclude without reiterating that if we are able peacefully to resolve the disputes that still persist, and if we transform the United Nations into a great force for economic and social progress, we will have sealed for the twenty-first century the indivisible alliance between peace and development.

The President: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua for his statement.

His Excellency Mr. Ernesto Leal, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua, was escorted from the rostrum.

The President: Before adjourning the meeting, I should like to inform delegations that, owing to the lateness of the hour, it will not be possible to hear all the speakers scheduled for the meeting this morning. The remaining speakers will therefore be moved to this afternoon's meeting at 3 p.m. as first speakers in their respective categories.

I should like to ask all delegations to be present punctually at 3 p.m. so that we can begin our afternoon meeting on time.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.